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For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

(RAMBLE CONTINUED.)

From vol. 5, page 271.

THIS island, or rather peninsula, was formerly called M'Gwye's or Maguy's isle, from its inhabitants being mostly of that name, and belonged to the bishop of Down and Connor; about the year 1604, Robert Humpston, bishop of Down and Connor, made a fee-farm lease of the island to sir Henry Piers and Sir Francis Annesly, at the yearly rent of £6. 13s. 4d. It was afterwards granted by James 1st to Sir Arthur Chichester, with the rectorial tythes and advowsons of the churches, * but on the 22d September 1640, Edward, first Viscount Chichester surrendered the tythes, &c. and in lieu thereof received the tythes and advowsons of the vicarage of Shankhill. The island was immediately after united into one parish. It is now divided into 26 townlands, and contains 3100 acres of excellent land, at the average price of 18s. per acre; the tythe is now compounded for at 2s. 8d. per acre, and is paid to the Rev. Thomas Graves, dean of Connor, rector. The number of dwelling houses amounts to about 290. The cess here is usually higher than in any other parish of the county, this year it amounted to £559. 0s. 8½d. only about sixty pounds of which was expended on roads, &c.

* Before the general dissolution of Monastic houses, the rectory of Whitekirk, in this island, was attached to the abbey of Muckamore, near Antrim; Kilkeran paid tythe to the abbey of Disart, alias Kells, county Antrim, and the two townlands, now called Ballypriors, anciently Ballypormagna and Parra, to the abbey of Goodborn, alias Goodburn, near Carrickfergus.

within the island; this has caused much grumbling at present, and I think with some reason, as several roads here stand in need of repair. The church cess this year amounted to £24. 5s. 8d. But to return from this long digression, having walked pretty fast for about two miles I stopt on a rising ground, the better to enjoy the prospect which was really ample; before me was the ocean, with a long ridge of the black mountains of Galloway and Argyle-shires in the back ground; the mull of Cantyre was most conspicuous, jutting out boldly towards the Irish coast, where a promontory seemed to meet that of the opposite shore; their rugged sides were smoothed by distance, and here and there their summits were lost to the naked eye by the haze of the atmosphere. Nearer, the prospect, though deficient in romantic grandeur, was much more interesting, the gentle swelling hills of Braid-island and Magheramorn, being finely chequered with the fields of ripening grain, which sight gave a more pleasing sensation to my mind than any scene of sterility whatsoever; farther northward the country gradually assumed a wilder aspect, and the view was terminated by the rugged headland of the county of Antrim already mentioned. An hypothesis has been formed by several learned authors, that Britain and Ireland were formerly united near those capes, and that they were separated by some terrible convulsion of nature; this opinion receives some support from the proximity of the capes, which are only about twenty miles asunder; some even go so far as to suppose that the island of Rahery, and some of the Western isles are fragments of a country buried at a very remote period under the ocean. Laying aside those learned guesses, I renewed

my journey, pleased to behold such snug farm-houses, and fields with such luxuriant crops; the fields of beans were now rather unpleasing to the eye from their dark hue, however they are still considered by the farmer as a steady crop, and not liable to be much injured by an inclement season, their harvest can also be attended to, when all others are over; besides, this crop does not reduce the soil, but rather enriches it.

The country presenting no striking objects, I soon reached the house of my acquaintance near Port-muck; he received me kindly, treating me with all that hospitality for which the inhabitants of this peninsula are said to be so conspicuous; after which he showed me several curious fossils found in the neighbourhood; they consisted chiefly of stones impregnated with different kinds of ore, also some of calcareous sandstone found on the beach, to which various marine shells adhered, all in a petrified state. But what most attracted my notice, was a brass gouge, about three inches long, and near half as much round, found in a chink of a limestone rock, about thirty feet below the surface of the earth.—As this metal has not been used for such instruments since the introduction of iron, it must have remained there many centuries, but how it came there is not easy to determine, as upwards of nine feet deep of solid clay-earth was dug off the limestone where the gouge was discovered. After examining those rarities some time, we took a walk out along the adjacent coast, opposite the isle of Muck; this small isle is merely a large rock covered with a thin stratum of earth, it is separated from the main-land, but can be entered on the west at low water; it appears to have been anciently

a place of defence, as on the land side some vestiges of a stone wall are still visible: on the northern side is the small port to which it gives name. On the north side of this haven are the ruins of the castle of Port-muck, a small quadrangular building, which seems to have been built for a fortress; in the outside of the western wall is an aperture like a chimney, called Peak's-hole, probably Puck's-hole, alias Browney, a fictitious personage, formerly very famous in this country. Adjoining this is a small building roofed with limestone, which seems coeval with the castle, and as those kinds of buildings are said to have been erected by the Danes, perhaps both were built by that nation; it seems by an opening in the wall to have been intended for a necessary, but tradition is silent as to its original use or founder. A little northward of this building are some remains of an ancient church. The fineness of the day now determined me to return home by a circular route, so taking leave of my acquaintance, I took a path leading across the island towards the ferry; this part of my walk was solemnly delightful; sometimes the path led along the verge of a precipice, beneath which the waves were dashing with some fury against the rugged projections of the rocks, it being now about high water; at other times it sunk into a little dell, or meandered along the borders of corn fields, &c. "Where large increase had blessed the fruitful plains." In my course I came to a large stone, or rather rock, commonly called a Rocking-stone; it is several tons weight, yet can be moved with facility by the hand; these stones are sometimes called lagans or logans, and are said to have been engines of the druidical

priestcraft; this one, however, appears in its natural situation, and seems to have become tremulous by the earth being walked from about its base: I am the more confirmed in this opinion as there is one similar to the above on the Maiden, alias Whillan-rocks, which lie a few miles off the the entrance of Larne lough, where it is more than probable the Druids never resided.— I now arrived at the ferry, or entrance of Larne lough, which here divides this island from the mainland of the county of Antrim; but the boats which ply to and fro here were both at the other side; so I sat down on the beach to wait the coming of either. The prospect was pretty agreeable; on the opposite shore were several white houses with the ruins of the castle of Olderfleet, near which several brigs, sloops, &c. were lying at anchor, and gave the place an appearance of some trade; the breeze scarce curled the surface of the lough, which inflected southward and was soon lost from my sight; the view was terminated by high hills near the village of Glynn, which rise boldly and gave an air of wildness to this part of the prospect. I had not remained long in this situation when a boat arrived, and three other passengers arriving about the same time, we instantly embarked; and I shall now present the reader with a view of the persons, &c. of my fellow-passengers.

(To be Continued.)

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON TREATMENT OF PERSONS LIBERATED FROM PRISON.

The genuine philanthropy of W. L. in his essay on prisons, in your last number, is pleasingly conspicuous. Prisons indeed require a speedy and radical reformation. In-

stead of assisting to correct vice, and lessen the number of crimes, they have, under their present system of management, a tendency to give to vice a bolder and more hardened front, and by their dangerous reaction on society, to increase the number of objects for confinement within their walls. I am afraid, however, that W. L. overlooks a strong principle in human nature, if he suppose, that those who have had their manners still more corrupted in a prison, will on their acquittal, or the expiration of their sentence, voluntarily submit to a second confinement, however mercifully regulated, while almost all their wishes, powerfully increased by the idleness of a prison, have been turned to the period of liberation, when they may put in practice the lessons of additional depravity and knavery, which they have learned from their profligate associates, and conjure out greater pests to society, than they went in. Such evils are inseparably connected with the present system of jails, where promiscuous intercourse between offenders, and idleness tend most strongly to corrupt the human heart, and where a corrective restraint on their morals is almost totally wanting. To remedy the defects which W. L. so feelingly points out, I can see no other remedy, than for the friends of humanity to turn their undivided attention towards aiding Sir Samuel Romilly's benevolent plan of penitentiary houses, in which the moral improvement of the prisoners may be especially attended to, and such correctives used, compounded of a judicious mixture of solitary confinement, and hard labour, without excluding the strong stimulus of hope, in case of improvement, as has been found to be so efficient. In the American system of prison-management, the produce of the labours of the cri-